

SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES OF MUGHAM AND RAGA IN EASTERN MUSIC

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Along with a number of important areas there have been numerous spheres in the culture of the world nations developed from the ancient times to modern period. Such spheres include cultural fields like painting, sculpture, theatre and others. Music has been a major and integral part of theatrical and dance performances in the ancient East. [1] It should be noted that folklore emerging from daily life and welfare of the world nations has been at the forefront as an important factor in the creation and development of the mentioned spheres.

A number of forms and genres derived from syncretism of folklore have become an important factor both in the Eastern and Western cultures. Numerous spheres of art emerging interculturally have maintained their influencing power since their creation up to modern times by playing an important part in the spiritual life of society.

Creation and development of oral professional music manifested itself in many aspects of the Eastern music. In the Eastern culture these features universally attached importance in the musical culture of the people inhabiting in different regions and stipulated creation of many genres. Oral professional music had one more tradition based genre which existed under the title of mugham in Azerbaijanis, makom in Tajiks and Uzbeks, Mukam in Uighurs, Raga in Indians, Gagaku in Japanese and so on. [2]

Extensive advocacy of mugham music and mugham festivals held in contemporary time in Azerbaijan directed our attention as researchers to investigate performance principles of mugham and raga, the impact of artistic and aesthetic aspects of these genres on society, identifying similarities and differences between them. First of all, we should consider that development of material and spiritual sides has been a key factor in all societies. [3] These two aspects have influenced each other all the time and had great importance in the formation of the material and spiritual life.

In the oral traditional folk music of both nations, the performers render free scale improvisations along with rhythmic pieces. Each melodic expression is specifically performed in mugham. Thus, a singer performing tesnifs, rhythmic mugams renders music whose scale is known in advance. In addition to this concretion, it should be noted that we also observe determination of scale in mugham depending on singer's improvisation and emergence of instrumental accompanying performance as per the same rhythm. Concerning the instruments rendering rhythmic principles, both performance of singers playing the def and the naghara (national Azerbaijani rhythmic instrument) included in "sazende" group (instrumental mugham group) maintain the same scale. Though the same is manifested in raga, completely different aspects being displayed, as well.

Thus, we observe raga singers reveal rhythmic principles depending on their own improvisations. In many cases, firstly, we observe improvisations of vocal singer and other

instrumental performers based on the scale rendered by rhythmic instruments, particularly the tabla. Eventually, in mugham submission of singers to rhythm is observed in tesnifs, rhythmic mugham and in raga scales appropriate to improvisations rendered by the tabla, however submission of rhythm to singer emerges from improvisation of singer in both genres.

One more point to be touched upon here is that vocal performer of raga while rendering rhythm determines scales by imitating instrumental voices as in generic performance features. However in mugham singers perform it within the scales of their own vocal techniques, "zengule"(mugham vocal technique). At that moment, unlike raga the accompanying instrumental performers imitate vocal elements. We observe submission of instrumental performances to vocal performance in raga, while contrary occurs in mugham not only in rhythmic coverage but also in general improvisations.

We may infer from here that instrumental performance prevail over vocal performance and vice versa occurs in mugham. Moreover, it should be noted that the principle of influencing of instrumental performance on a vocal one has exceeded the frame of raga and recognised in the world music as "vocalise"- a new genre. Another example is "scat" vocal style emerged in jazz music. As we know, this style demonstrates direct imitation of musical instruments in vocal performance.

Concerning mugham and raga performers' approach to rhythm, it should be noted that there have been undeniable role of rhythm masters both in Azerbaijan and India. The vivid examples to these masters are Natig Shirinov in Azerbaijan who made worldwide recognition of rhythmic instrument naghara (a kind of drums) to the world and Zakir Hussain who is considered the genius of the tabla in India. Both masters, particularly Natig Shirinov with his extra ordinary and great performance has brought novelties not only to folk and contemporary music but also to the accompaniment of mugham and raga accordingly. Natig Shirinov played undeniable role in enriching and developing rhythmic hues, colours and characters in naghara performance.

Another role of mugham and raga in the spiritual life of society has been its strength of psychological impact and association with daily life. Viewed in this context, common features in both genres draw attention. First of all, concerning rhythmic coherence we observe association of this principle with natural factors. As we know nature itself is based on the rhythmic coherence. Here we can show unchanged rhythm of night and day, weeks, months, seasons, years as examples. Covering of raga and mugham many factors in the life of society causes reflection of natural rhythmic scales arising from this aspect. Raga is associated with the meanings of colour, excitement and passion. [4] As implied by the name, raga's association with these feelings serves experiencing these emotions with the music as well.

In Indian music ragas are prescribed for different times of the day. Supposedly, ragas inappropriate to the time of the day may be harmful for a person. The tradition of listening to raga only at a certain time of the day survived today in the western part of India. In India every 3 hours of a day is divided into 8 sections and each section has its own raga. For example, ragas performed in the morning - "Ahir Bhairav", afternoon - "Bhimpalasi", towards evening "Desh", evening "Kafi, night - "Spring", "Malkaus" and others are differed with high importance. Other types of raga associated with seasons, "Spring" and "Basant" performed in spring, as well as "Malhar" (to strengthen the rain) during the rainy season are factors attracting attention. These

principles are also encountered in mughams of Azerbaijani music. Some points were stated in "Behjetul-ruh" by Safiyaddin Urmavi, the creator of the first Azerbaijani note system, scholar and musician. Thus, Urmavi Safiyaddin noting seasonal mughams cites "Nowruz", "Saba", "Mahur" for spring, "Rast", "Penjgah", "Ajam" for summer, "Buzurk", "Hijaz", "Basta" for autumn and "Maye", "Bayati", "Shahnaz" for winter as examples. Urmavi Safiyaddin also touches upon some nuances not encountered in any country's music. Within the range of tables compiled by him he mentions performance of mughams according to each class. For example, for scholars "Eraq", "Nishapur", "Segah", for rulers "Hussein", "Ushshaq", "Basta Nigar", for women "Shahnaz", "Neyriz", "Seygah", for marketers "Ovc", "Zabul", "Gerdaniyye", for poets "Hecazi", "Selmek" and other lists have been mentioned [5].

Thus, we attempted to identify similarities and differences between overall performance principles of mugham and raga. Mugham and raga are world music masterpieces and the integral parts of the Eastern culture.

References

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Summary

This article deals with the Azerbaijani mughams and Indian ragas. The roles of both genres in society, influence to human psychology and other features have been analysed in the article. It also highlights similarities and differences of mugham and raga and presents the features of performance.